

Forty-six years ago, President John F. Kennedy created the Peace Corps with the aim of enabling ordinary men and women to combat the debilitating effects of poverty, disease, and war in developing countries. More than 187,000 volunteers have served in 139 countries, and it is clear that the Peace Corps' impact has been truly extraordinary.

The leadership embodied in the Peace Corps Volunteers have helped farmers find new efficient methods for crop production, developed new business plans for economically depressed communities, and inspired countless children by acting as mentors and teachers. Their compassion and commitment to service have led to significant achievements in fostering improved understanding and strengthening the bonds of friendship.

Peace Corps Volunteers remain committed to addressing some of the world's most pressing problems today. These men and women have offered crucial assistance to communities struggling to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, to regions devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and to countries rebuilding after deadly tsunamis. For their brave service and dedication, these Volunteers deserve to be commended.

To date, the 6th District of California has produced almost 400 Peace Corps Volunteers, including the following 28 current volunteers: Troy A. Agron, who is working in Azerbaijan; Caron L. Alarab, Guinea; Carol A. Batz, Tonga; Libby A. Bersot, Botswana; Jennifer M. Busick, Bolivia; Eldon L. Christenson, Guinea; Rustin P. Crandall, Guyana; Joseph P. Deschenes, Albania; Tameron A. Eaton, Eastern Caribbean; Amil A. Gehrke, Georgia; Robyn M. Grahm, Honduras; Donald F. Hesse, Jordan; Jessica D. Holloway, Armenia; Connor J. Kamada, Senegal; Anna F. Kuhn, Tanzania; Abigail M. Lafrenz, Bulgaria; Bridget M. Leddy, Kyrgyzstan; Ana Alecia Lyman, Mozambique; Sydney F. McCall, Bolivia; Morgan C. Montgomery, Honduras; Laura M. Norton, Madagascar; Jordan M. Reeves, Panama; Uriah S. Reisman, Panama; Jacob E. Rich, Peru; Emily C. Ryan, China; Elicia F. Smith, Kenya; Katherine L. Theiss-Nyland, Malawi; Kyla H. Wall-Polin, Bulgaria.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to honor the 46th anniversary of the establishment of the Peace Corps and to celebrate the achievements of these passionate men and women who have succeeded in making our world more peaceful.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CHRIS
MEYER

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Chris Meyer, the Vice President of Convention Center Sales for the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority.

In his role with the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, Chris has effectively promoted and implemented important programs which have marketed Las Vegas as a trade show destination. As a result of his efforts through Trade Show Trade Mission, the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority has marketed Las Vegas as a destination for trade shows for organizations such as the Con-

sumer Electronics Show, the National Association of Broadcasters, Magic, and ConAg/ConExpo.

By helping to redefine Las Vegas as a trade show destination, Chris and the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority have increased Las Vegas tourism and revenue. As a result of Chris's Trade Mission, international tourism has increased as well. According to estimations, as a result of the Trade Missions to Brazil and China, an additional 3,000 Brazilian and Chinese tourists have visited the Las Vegas area. This alone has led to approximately \$4,515,000 of revenue for the Las Vegas area.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Chris Meyer and his many achievements. His dedication to the Las Vegas community is commendable and I wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, the promise of America means different things to different people. To some, it may represent better economic opportunities. To others, it is having access to a better education, better healthcare, or a better job. To still others, it is simply the chance for a better life.

But regardless of how we define the "promise of America," there is little doubt that Neighborhood Centers Inc.—Houston's largest and fastest-growing human services agency—is making that promise a reality for thousands of people in Southeast Texas. And the scope of that accomplishment is being underscored this month, as Neighborhood Centers celebrates its 100th anniversary of providing education, resources, and connections to the area's most vulnerable communities. Our Congressional District is served very well by Neighborhood Centers Inc.'s facilities and programs.

Founded in 1907 by Alice Graham Baker—the grandmother of former Secretary of State James Baker III—Neighborhood Centers Inc. stands as a shining example of how innovative strategies and consistency of purpose, animated by a heart as big as Texas, can produce truly transformational change.

From its inception, Neighborhood Centers has focused on helping underserved communities to achieve their full potential. The organization pursues this mission not by concentrating on the weaknesses of a neighborhood and its residents, but by building on the unique skills, strengths, resources, and capabilities that already exist. It then works to nurture these assets in order to create self-sufficiency, individual empowerment, and long-term economic and social development.

The result is a unique approach for connecting people with what they need to fully realize the promise of America: child and family care, education, job skills, entrepreneurial incubators, leadership development, legal assistance, after-school programs, citizenship services, teacher training, and activities for seniors that encourage aging in place.

The ability and willingness to provide these services have brought Neighborhood Centers

face to face with numerous challenges over the years. But challenges are not uncommon to the agency. It has traditionally been Houston's go-to organization when it comes to dealing with the region's most complex issues. As Angela Blanchard, president and CEO, once said: "The harder it is, the better we like it."

Neighborhood Centers' response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrates clearly that those are not mere words.

When the storm forced hundreds of thousands of New Orleans residents to flee to Houston, Neighborhood Centers created a special program called Stay Connected. It provided evacuees assistance in finding jobs, healthcare, homes, and other essential human needs. It worked to restore a sense of community for those who decided to make Houston their home. It helped rebuild lives, renew hope, and revitalize opportunity. To date, Stay Connected—which is largely staffed by Katrina victims—has served more than 4,000 families.

That brings me to my final point about Neighborhood Centers: This is an organization defined by compassion, concern, and commitment.

The agency and everyone involved with its mission—including corporate partners such as JPMorganChase, Shell, Chevron, and Aramark—share an unbounded faith in human potential.

They truly believe that people, when treated with respect and dignity and given a chance to grow and to build self-esteem, can have a profoundly positive impact on families, communities, and the entire social and economic fabric not only of Houston but of America as well. Potential is not just an abstract concept to Neighborhood Centers. It is a concrete foundation for touching lives, lifting hearts, and fulfilling promise.

Over the past 100 years, Neighborhood Centers has never sidestepped an opportunity—or avoided an obligation—to keep that potential alive. In doing so, it has not simply made the American Dream a reality. It has kept the Human Dream alive. I cannot think of a more significant contribution to this country to those who make it great.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF
ESTHER RENTERÍA

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend and fellow Californian, Esther Rentería, who passed away January 8, 2007, at her Montebello, California home at the age of 67. Esther was a skilled journalist who was committed to increasing the presence of Latinos in broadcast media.

For decades, Esther advocated to increase the numbers of Latinos in the news and other television programs. She understood the importance of Latino children watching people on television who looked like them and could relate to them. Esther's endless advocacy and enthusiasm helped increase and positively modify the presence of Latinos in the media.

In 1969, Esther was the first Latina to appear in a nightly newscast with the premiere of "Ahora!" on KCET-TV, and in 1970 she